

Coosa County 4-H Wildlife Team Wins National Honors

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(L-R) Coach Roger Vines, team members Amanda Luker, Emily Vines, Tiler Lamberth, Coach Joel Glover, and team member Holly Corder.

The Coosa County wildlife team won first place honors this summer at the 2001 National Championship 4-H Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Program (WHEP). The competition was held at Grand Targhee Ski Resort near Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming. Twenty-five states entered teams in the event.

Alabama's foursome of Emily Vines, Holly Corder, Amanda Luker, and Tiler Lamberth saw their weeks and years of preparation pay off during the national competition. As a team, the group earned First Place Overall. In individual competition, Emily Vines earned the overall high individual score and Holly Corder placed fourth overall. Amanda Luker and Tiler Lamberth were not far behind, with

only nine points separating the four members.

The contest consists of five parts. In part one, team members evaluate a tract of forestland and make written recommendations on how to improve the site for a variety of wildlife species. The recommendations must be based on an evaluation of the contest site and the particular habitat needs of the animals that live there.

In part two of the competition, team members identify a variety of wildlife foods and then complete an answer sheet to show which animals feed on which food categories. Part three involves an evaluation of aerial photographs to determine areas with the most suitable wildlife habitat for the target species.

There is also an oral test where teams justify their placement of the photos. The last two parts are team events in which the team members work together to write wildlife management plans on both rural and urban sites.

Roger Vines of the Alabama Cooperative Extension System and Joel Glover of the Alabama Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries served as team coaches. Laurie Vines and Debra Lamberth served as team chaperones.

This is the seventh time since 1987 that Coosa County's team won the state event and then participated in the national contest. These teams won two National Championships; three 2nd Place awards, one 3rd Place award, and one 5th Place award. 